

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 724
(I-03)

Introduced by: American Association of Public Health Physicians

Subject: Political Interference with NIH Grants Affecting Public Health

Referred to: Reference Committee J
(Steven C. Arendt, MD, Chair)

1 Whereas, HIV, STDs, drug use, teen sexuality and its consequences are health issues of
2 clinical and public health significance; and
3

4 Whereas, HIV, in particular, and chlamydia and gonorrhea have been increasing in youth 15-25
5 years; and
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7 Whereas, HIV and STDs are significantly, if not totally, contributed to by risk-taking behaviors,
8 including the use of drugs; and
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10 Whereas, Epidemiologic studies to ascertain what factors are causal or ameliorative leading to
11 HIV, STDs and teenage risky behaviors continue to be the most significant means to develop a
12 scientific basis for prevention/intervention strategies; and
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14 Whereas, The National Institutes of Health, in its mission and as part of the implementation of
15 Healthy People 2010 to prevent disease based on scientific data, has provided peer-reviewed
16 research grants for the study of these conditions and contributing behaviors; and
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18 Whereas, It has been reported by the Associated Press on October 27, 2003, that the
19 Washington-based Traditional Values Coalition has compiled a list of 157 researchers with NIH
20 grants whose projects include the study of subjects such as teenagers' sexual activity, sexual
21 and mental health, sex and drug use among truckers and sexually transmitted diseases among
22 Mexican immigrants; and
23

24 Whereas, The executive director of Traditional Values Coalition was quoted as calling the grants
25 a "total abuse of taxpayer dollars" and stating that "We know for a fact that millions and millions
26 of dollars have been flushed down the toilet over years on this HIV, AIDS scam and sham," and
27 he has prevailed on congressional representatives to investigate the recipients of these
28 research grants; and
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30 Whereas, As a result, the NIH has reportedly been calling researchers to "inform them that their
31 names were on a list being circulated in Washington"; and
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33 Whereas, This type of contact appears to be unnecessary, as NIH has approved the grants and
34 the grants are in the public record for anyone needing such information, and may in fact appear
35 to have an intimidation effect on researchers; and
36

37 Whereas, There have been prior efforts by a member of the House of Representatives to
38 prohibit the NIH from funding five specific research grants on sexual health and functioning;
39 therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association assert as policy that objective science, not
2 subjective ideology or politics, should be the basis for research, and the consequent practice of
3 clinical medicine and public health (New HOD Policy); and be it further
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5 RESOLVED, That our AMA communicate directly to Department of Health and Human Services
6 Secretary Tommy Thompson, the leaders of the Senate and Speaker of the House of
7 Representatives its strong objection to political interference with the progress of scientific
8 endeavor (Directive to Take Action); and be it further
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10 RESOLVED, That our AMA stress that scientific researchers, recipients of peer-reviewed
11 grants--funded by the taxes of the public for the benefit of the public--in the pursuit of answers to
12 significant public health issues, should not be subject to intimidation or harassment at the
13 behest of constituents acting on ideology, not science. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Staff cost estimated at less than \$500 to communicate with appropriate agencies.

Received: 11/24/03

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 725
(I-03)

Introduced by: Section on Medical Schools

Subject: Support of the National Institutes of Health Peer Review System

Referred to: Reference Committee J
(Steven C. Arendt, MD, Chair)

1 Whereas, Some 200 National Institutes of Health funded research grants on controversial, but
2 critically important public health issues, largely dealing with sexual behaviors, are being
3 subjected to extraordinary scrutiny as a result of pressure from either members of Congress or
4 private advocacy groups; and
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6 Whereas, While congressional oversight of the merit review process plays an essential role in
7 ensuring appropriate accountability for the nation's investment in scientific research, the integrity
8 of the oversight processes themselves should never be compromised by intrusion of extraneous
9 sectarian or ideological issues; and
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11 Whereas, The most scientifically rigorous and relevant research addressing vital public health
12 concerns must be funded without regard to the sectarian or ideological views of political parties
13 or other special interest groups--regardless of where they reside on the ideological spectrum;
14 and
15

16 Whereas, The NIH peer review system has demonstrated its ability to identify and promote the
17 highest quality of original, creative research; therefore be it
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19 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association inform Congress of its strong support for
20 the National Institutes of Health peer review system and its deep concern regarding apparent
21 efforts to breach the integrity of the system. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Advocate accordingly at estimated total staff cost of \$1,086.

Received: 12/6/03